

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE B-22

NEW YORK TIMES
13 JANUARY 1982

President Moves to Curb Unauthorized Disclosures

By PHIL GAILEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12 — President Reagan, asserting that unauthorized disclosures of classified material had hampered the conduct of foreign policy, today ordered a series of measures to protect national security information.

In a statement released by the White House, Mr. Reagan said the unauthorized disclosure of classified information had become a "problem of major proportions" and vowed to use "all legal means" to identify and discipline officials who violated the new rules.

The President ordered that these steps be taken:

Any official involved in national se-

curity policy will be required to obtain approval from a senior official before talking to a reporter. After the interview, the official will have to write a memorandum on what matters were discussed.

The number of officials with access to national security and intelligence information will be kept "to the minimum essential to the orderly conduct of the Government's business," the statement said.

When an unauthorized disclosure occurs, all Government employees with access to the information will be subject to investigation. Mr. Reagan said "all legal means" would be used to identify the source of the disclosure. White House officials declined to elaborate.

The President's directive will apply to all national security officials in the executive branch, including those in the State and Defense Departments.

In his statement, Mr. Reagan said he was mindful of the Constitution's guarantees on freedom of the press and individual liberties and said he would attempt to carry out the directive in "a balanced and careful manner."

"I do not believe, however," Mr. Reagan added, "that the Constitution entitles Government employees, entrusted with confidential information critical to the functioning and effectiveness of the Government, to disclose such information with impunity. Yet this is precisely the situation we have. It must not be allowed to continue."

David R. Gergen, White House communications director, said some of the disclosures that had caused the President to act had resulted in the compromise of sensitive intelligence sources and information, including some cases where lives were endangered.

Disclosure on Taiwan Cited

Pressed for an example, Mr. Gergen cited the disclosure of the Administration's decision not to sell advanced military aircraft to Taiwan.

He said the details for the enforcement of the new policy were still being worked out, such as whether the Federal Bureau of Investigation would be used to investigate violations and how to restrict the number of officials with access to classified information.

Mr. Gergen, in response to questions, said the Administration did not anticipate "a vast expansion of classified information" under the policy, which he said would apply to material ranging from "top secret" to "confidential."

Beyond that, White House officials said Mr. Reagan felt that the disclosures were hampering the Administration's ability to conduct foreign policy. In a supporting statement released at the same time by the White House, William P. Clark Jr., the President's new national security adviser, said that in some cases the publication of classified information "rules out a foreign policy option, or jeopardizes an ongoing policy."

Mr. Clark said that reporters had been doing a better job of collecting classified information than Government officials had in protecting it, adding, "These limited measures are designed to restore a balance that has been lost."

Asked if Mr. Reagan was following the example of President Nixon, who authorized a group called the "White House plumbers" to investigate "leaks" to the media, Mr. Gergen replied, "Every President has been concerned about this problem. Every President has taken remedial steps to deal with it. This President is attempting to do it."